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5-13-1976

Newsletter - 1976-05-13

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FROM: Kika de la Garza

Washington D C

RURAL AMERICA will be the victim if the plan of the U S Postal Service to shut down thousands of small post offices throughout the country, including some in South Texas, is carried out. A postal official recently was quoted in the press as saying the plan should not be regarded "as an assault on rural America," but it is hard to see the proposed shutdowns in any other light.

Many protests have reached me from individuals in our area whose daily lives would be adversely affected by the closing of their local post offices. They are concerned and angry. They are deeply skeptical of the claim that this move grows out of a desire to improve the efficiency of their mail service.

One letter I received from a husband and wife states this skepticism in plain language. They wrote: "We don't believe efficiency will be gained. We don't believe rural residents will be served better. And we don't believe the Postal Service will save any money." Another constituent writes, "The more improvements are made, the less service we get."

The Postal Service says no change will be made in the status of any post office until a survey has been made of the affected community and an opportunity given for the patrons involved to review alternatives. Some survey! Under each of the four alternatives put forward by the Postal Service the local post office as it now exists would be put out of business. A form is provided for the patrons to choose among the four plans. But nowhere is there a little box alongside a statement "None of the above." They are simply given a choice of evils.

This information was included in my recent testimony before the House Post Office Subcommittee on Postal Service, which held a special hearing on the proposed shutdown of rural post offices. As I told the Subcommittee, I believe Congress should act to regain control of the mail service. It is of basic importance to South Texans and all Americans.

* * *

KING JUAN CARLOS of Spain will visit the U S during our Bicentennial Year and his coming has a special interest to our border area. It was Spain, through the liberal monarch Charles III, that furnished George Washington with money, arms and uniforms for the American fighters for freedom. The military action of the Spanish commander, Don Bernardo de Galvez (for whom the city of Galveston is named), made it easier for Washington to receive substantial and vitally needed help through the Mississippi waterway.

The young king of Spain on his visit to this country therefore will represent the nation that, together with France, helped enable the Revolutionary army to establish

a free government on the North American Continent. Many years before, the New World had been discovered by a Spanish-sponsored expedition. Our Spanish heritage includes a civilization that goes back centuries before the coming of the Europeans. It is with pride in this enduring heritage that we welcome the coming of the present King Carlos.

* * *

WORLD TRADE has been an American tradition during the 200 years of our national existence. It was one of three elements cited by Thomas Jefferson in his first inaugural address when he told his countrymen that the fledgling nation's goal was "peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations." This year, President Ford has proclaimed the week of May 16-22 as World Trade Week, the fiftieth anniversary of its observance.

Export sales by American industry and agriculture last year totaled more than \$107 billion, the highest rate in our history. It is estimated that somewhere around three million jobs in the U S are directly related to exports -- including, of course, agricultural exports from our own area. An additional benefit is that our exports of goods and services enable our country to earn the foreign exchange required to buy the things we need to keep our economy going.

America's performance in the world marketplace, as the President said in his proclamation, "is a true measure of the quality of American products, the extent of American ingenuity, and the dedication of American labor and industry to international commerce."

* * *

LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES in our area and elsewhere which have had schools destroyed or damaged by such catastrophies as storm, flood, hurricane or fire will soon be eligible to receive Federal financial assistance. The aid, authorized by Congress several years ago, is becoming available for the first time.

This financial help, known as pinpoint disaster assistance, will consist of loans for the reconstruction of seriously damaged or destroyed school facilities and grants for loss of revenue or increased current operating expenditures and minor repair or replacement of supplies and equipment. An initial request for pinpoint disaster assistance should come directly from the State Governor, not the local school system.

* * *

VISITORS FROM HOME Visiting my office from home this week were: Mr Mendal Hughett of Alice; Mr Herndon Aderhold of Edinburg; Mr Rollins Koppel and family of Harlingen; and Mr William Burden of Raymondville.

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